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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We are pleased to receive Letters to the Editor on appropriate subjects. These letters should be submitted in typewritten form, double-spaced, and are not to exceed 2½ pages. When appropriate, we will solicit comments from the original authors. All Letters to the Editor are subject to editing and possible abridgment.

ANTINUCLEAR ANTIBODIES IN SCLERODERMA

To the Editor:

Blaszczyk et al in their recent report [1] found a considerably higher incidence of antinuclear antibodies (ANA) in patients with scleroderma when tested on monkey esophagus (97.4%) than on rat liver (61.5%). Substrate specificity was seen in 48.7% of scleroderma cases, whereas only 15.8% of patients with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) showed such specificity.

Probably substrate specificity in the scleroderma group is mainly pattern dependent. Speckles which are mainly confined to scleroderma and are usually not seen in SLE [2] differ from other patterns in being considerably less prominent on rat liver tissues than on other substrates such as human spleen imprints [3] and apparently also monkey esophagus [1].

It should be possible to determine if the substrate specificity seen in scleroderma was in fact mainly pattern dependent, being specifically associated with speckles. What were the patterns of the scleroderma patients who were positive on monkey esophagus but negative on rat liver?

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REPLY TO DR. BURNHAM

In response to the letter of Dr. Burnham, we would like to stress that our data are essentially in agreement with his statement. Speckles were less prominent on rat liver tissue than on monkey esophagus, and the substrate specificity was in 80% of cases (12 of 15) associated with speckled pattern of ANA.

The patterns of ANA in scleroderma patients positive on monkey esophagus but negative in rat liver.

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REPLY TO DR. OKUN

To the Editor:

The problem of whether the tyrosine, dopa; dopa, dopaquinone pathway uses 1 or 2 enzymes is still unsolved. Purified hamster melanoma enzyme preparations have been reported to be active in both steps [1–2] and some investigators believe that a single enzyme, tyrosinase catalyses both reactions [1–8]. Another group believes, however, that a nonspecific peroxidase is involved in the hydroxylation of tyrosine to dopa and that mammalian dopa oxidase cannot catalyze tyrosine hydroxylation [9–12]. Our experiments do not enable us for the moment to solve this question [13].

The purpose of our study was to determine any variations in the enzyme pattern localizations in the various cultured human malignant melanocytes without any biochemical aim.

In conclusion, the question of the nature of the various enzymes involved in the metabolic pathway which goes from tyrosine to dopaquinone remains open. In these conditions we choose the classical term of tyrosinase used nearly by all cytochemists who studied the ultrastructural localizations of these enzyme.

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